GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4104
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
VERDICT ON KANISHKA AIR CRASH
Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh;Yadav Shri Baleshwar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has examined the verdict given recently by the Supreme Court of Canada wherein all the accused of the Kanishka air crash have been exonerated;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has requested the Government of Canada to get the above verdict reviewed;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the number of Indians who perished in the above crash; and

(e) the details of compensation paid, if any, to the kin of the deceased?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

(a) Government has noted the judgment delivered on March16, 2004 by the British Columbia Court regarding the Air India Kanishka bombing case.

(b) & (c) In response to a question, the Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs said on March 17, 2005 that `the Kanishka bombing has been the most heinous terrorist attack in civil aviation history`. Government `share the sense of outrage among the relatives and friends of those who lost their lives in that attack that after almost two decades, the culprits have not been brought to account. Terrorism is recognised today as an action for which there can be no justification under any circumstances. It cannot have a rationale or context and the vast majority of nations and people reject it outrightly`. Government share `the hopes of all those affected by this tragedy that one day, justice may yet be done`. During the 7th Meeting of the India-Canada Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism on April 11- 12, 2005, India again shared the sense of disappointment and outrage among the relatives of the victims of the Air India Kanishka bombing case.

Public Security Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Canada Ms. Anne McLellan has announced that she would appoint an independent advisor to examine the matter of a broader investigation. British Columbia Court of Appeal has given 30 days extension to the Prosecutors to appeal the acquittals of the two accused. The Canadian House of Commons passed a resolution with a vote of 172-124 on April 12, 2005 calling for a public enquiry into the investigation of the Air India bombing.

(d) Of the total number of victims in the Air India crash, there were 159 Canadian citizens, a majority of whom were of Indian origin, 148 Indians including 22 members of crew, 20 American and 2 British nationals.

(e) Compensation paid included about $ 75,000 to non-earning adults, $25,000 to children. Family members of the victims signed waiver agreements at the time of receiving the compensation.